

How Can I Sleep Tight If I Have to Worry About Bed Bugs Biting?

And other philosophical questions answered

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Yes, bed bugs are real and not part of some long-standing plot to frighten children at bedtime.



And this is what they look like:



They are brown and flat (when unfed), becoming rounder and redder after a blood meal. Adults are about 1/4-1/3 inch in length.

Another view:



What do they do?

- **Like mosquitoes, they take blood meals from warm-blooded creatures, including people**
- **Also like mosquitoes, they feed using a specially developed piercing-sucking mouth and have anesthetic & blood-thinning properties in their saliva**
- **Unlike mosquitoes, males and females, and immature and adult forms all take blood meals**

Things to know about 'em:

- They specialize in cohabitation with people
- They feed at night, on exposed skin
- A single species, *Cimex lectularius*, occurs world-wide
- During the day, they hide in cracks and other hidden areas around the bed
- They are easily transported in bedding and other personal effects
- They live a long time (months) between meals

How do I know if I have them?

- **Unexplained itchy welts**
- **Blood/fecal spots on surfaces**
- **Characteristic odor present**
- **Adults/nymphs seen**
- **Cast skins detected**

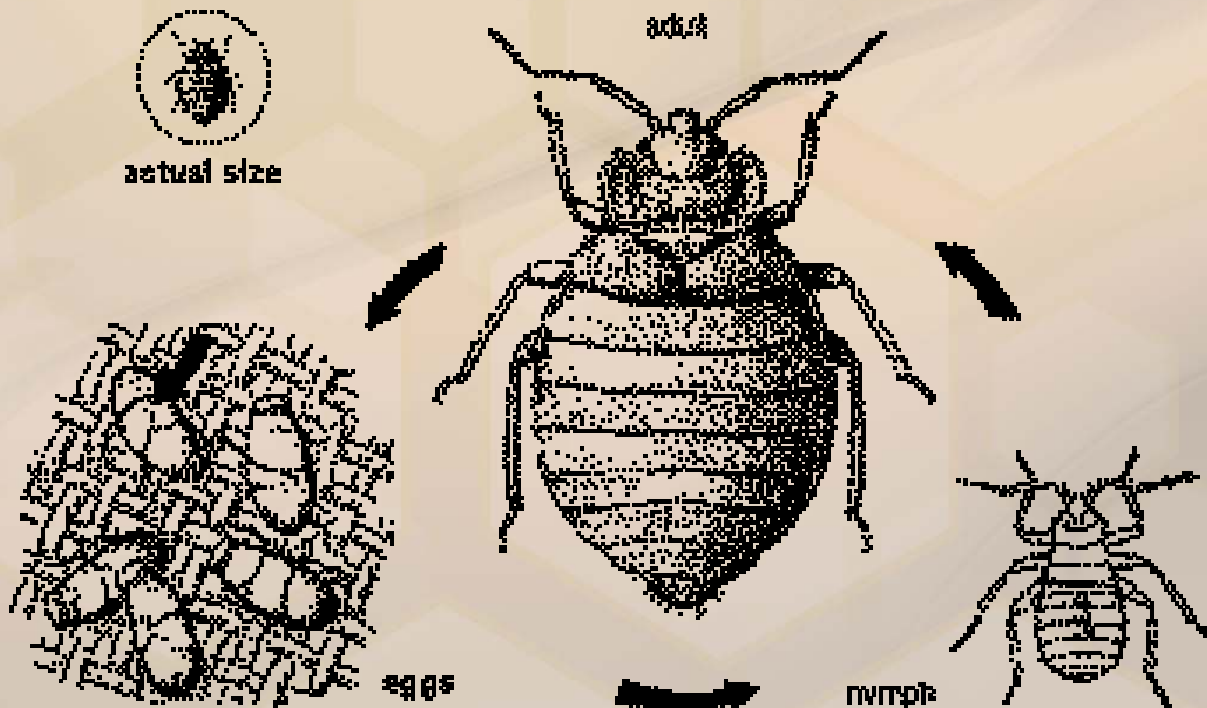
Stains and bugs on mattresses:



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Where Do They Come from?

Well, when a mommy bed bug and a daddy bed bug love each other very much...



Why are we suddenly hearing about them?

Bloodthirsty Bedbugs Stage Comeback in U.S., Europe

James Owen
for National Geographic News

May 13, 2004

"Sleep tight, don't let the bedbugs bite." This old saying may be becoming newly relevant. Bedbugs, which feast on human blood at night, are biting back in developed countries around the world.

The current invasion of North America, Australia, and Western Europe is highlighted in a new study published by the Institute of Biology, London. But it's still unclear why the parasites are returning to cities where they were exterminated some 50 years ago...

Why the Resurgence?

Theories:

- **More people are traveling greater distances more quickly**
- **Stronger pesticides with longer residual lives have been phased out**
- **??**

What is the Public Health Importance of Bed Bugs?

**Very little P.H. importance:
Bed bugs do not vector human
disease**

**Major impact is as a nuisance
and an aesthetic issue**

**Very small percentage of the
population is hypersensitive**

How do I get rid of them?

- **Hygiene**
- **Clutter removal**
- **Caulk and fill**
- **Hunt and destroy missions**
- **Pesticides (best to use PCA)**
- **Be careful about transport/receipt of unknown personal items**
- **Patience and diligence**